



Nursing Homes Ireland

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Minister Simon Harris TD
Department of Health,
Block 1, Miesian Plaza,
50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street,
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D02 XW14

17th April 2020

Dear Minister,

Thank you once again for our earlier meeting and your commitment to work with NHI, our members and all stakeholder in a true partnership approach in addressing the significant challenges presented by COVID19 in the nursing home sector.

I refer to confirmation of the NPHEP recommendations and welcome announcement of the support of residential care facilities by HIQA albeit at this advanced stage of the pandemic.

In response to NPHEP announcement, we require clarification on how the Quality Assessment Framework will be undertaken? The HPSC state that staff should only work in one Residential Care Facility and not move across settings. HPSC also state that only essential healthcare/cleaning/cooking professionals should be permitted to enter the facility. Will HIQA staff move across settings? And if so how can this be kept in line with best practice?

Perhaps the assessments could be done on a desk basis with designated centres sending HIQA the preparedness plans, training records, inventory of PPE, staff contingency plans, risk assessments, cohorting plans, reviews of the impact on residents and families and any other documentation required to assure the Authority that there are preparations for a COVID19 outbreak.

Nursing homes can facilitate video conferencing for meetings. It is noted that most GP's are not attending nursing homes at this time and are communicating by video conference.

I think at this crucial point when 70 per cent of Nursing Homes are COVID free, all stakeholders would want everything done to prevent the virus entering the Nursing home. We are all too familiar with the profound consequences that it has in other facilities.

We propose that Department of Health review this, also consideration of an impact assessment of the plan may also be worthwhile. As you will appreciate, providers and Persons in Charge are working under huge stress too at the moment and additional challenges need to be kept to a practical level.

Yours sincerely,

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Tadhg Daly,
Chief Executive Officer

cc Dr Kathleen McLellan, Department of Health
Mr Phelim Quinn, CEO, HIQA